

REAR ADMIRAL FERDINAND V. BERLEY
MEDICAL CORPS, UNITED STATES NAVY, RETIRED

Ferdinand Victor Berley was born in Chicago, Illinois, on September 9, 1912, son of Guy J. and Victoria (Garrett) Berley. He attended Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois and Northwestern Medical School, Chicago, receiving the degrees of Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Medicine and in 1938 Doctor of Medicine. From 1930 until 1934 he was a member of the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Unit at Northwestern and between 1934 and 1938 was an Ensign, U. S. Naval Reserve, making three active duty cruises. He was commissioned Lieutenant (jg) in the Medical Corps of the U. S. Navy on July 18, 1938, and subsequently advanced in rank, attaining that of Captain, to date from July 1, 1955. On January 31, 1959, after twenty one years service, he was transferred to the Retired List of the U. S. Navy and was advanced to Rear Admiral on the basis of combat awards.

Upon receiving his appointment in the Medical Corps in 1938, he had his internship at the U. S. Naval Hospital, San Diego, California. In 1939 he was ordered to Asiatic Station, where he joined the Staff of Commander Destroyer Division FIFTY EIGHT as Medical Officer, and in 1940 reported as Battalion Medical Officer with the FOURTH Marines. He was serving in that capacity when the United States entered World War II, December 8, 1941 and subsequently participated with the FOURTH Marines, in the defense of the Philippines. In May 1942 he was captured by the Japanese at Corregidor and remained a Prisoner of War until his liberation in September 1945. For outstanding services he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, an Oak Leaf Cluster in lieu of a Second Bronze Star Medal (Army), and a Gold Star in lieu of the Third Bronze Star Medal, each with Combat "V." The citations follow in part:

Bronze Star Medal: "For heroic service while attached to the Staff of the Medical Dispensary at the Cavite Navy Yard in the Philippines during and subsequent to the bombing attack by enemy Japanese forces on December 10, 1941. Undaunted by the continuous bursting of enemy bombs, which rained death and destruction and rendered the Navy Yard a blazing inferno, he administered first aid with prompt and unfailing efficiency despite the danger and confusion. Working rapidly and with resourceful initiative, he assisted other medical officers present in caring for more than one hundred wounded and injured before arrangements were made to transfer casualties by boat and by truck to the Canacao Hospital where he continued his valiant efforts during the subsequent evacuation of all patients to the Sternbery General Hospital in Manila. Concerned only for the safety of our sick and wounded, Lieutenant Berley rendered gallant service until ultimately taken prisoner by the Japanese..."

Oak Leaf Cluster in lieu of Bronze Star Medal: "Lieutenant Ferdinand V. Berley, as Medical Officer with Company E, SECOND Battalion, FOURTH Marine Regiment of Corregidor performed heroic service on April 24, 1942. To render medical aid to a seriously wounded man he voluntarily proceeded by truck over a road swept by enemy fire and showered by exploding ammunition to Battery Hamilton, which itself was gravely endangered by the threatened explosion of Battery Crockett. After preparing the wounded man for movement, he placed him on the truck and returned by the same hazardous route..."

Gold Star in lieu of Second Bronze Star Medal: "For meritorious service as Senior American Medical Officer and Second in Command of the Prisoner of War Hospital Unit, Kobe, Japan, from June 5 to August 17, 1945. With the entire hospital a blazing inferno during a devastating raid by American Bombers on the Japanese city of Kobe, Commander Berley repeatedly entered the burning buildings, extricating the injured, assisting or carrying to safety the sick, and attempting to salvage medical equipment. For the next few hours he worked untiringly, administering first aid to the American and Allied casualties as well as to the wounded Japanese civilians. Placed in charge after evacuation of many of the patients and staff to a distant camp, he labored unceasingly to restore comfortable quarters for the rest of the patients, most of whom were stretcher cases. Later that night, when ordered by Japanese authority to vacate Kobe Hospital immediately, despite a raging storm and darkness and destruction outside, he and the five other staff members undertook this long and perilous journey, rendering all possible aid to the helpless patients. Arriving at the new camp with many of the patients in critical condition, no medicine or bandages, and very little food, he effectively handled the acute sanitation problems and, by his constant and determined efforts in the face of these extreme odds, succeeded in alleviating the discomforts of the patients and in improving the difficult conditions under which the hospital unit was forced to live..."

He was also awarded the Purple Heart Medal for wounds received in enemy action on May 8, 1944 and received the Army Distinguished Unit Emblem with Oak Leaf Cluster for action, December 7, 1941-April 9, 1942 and March 14, 1942 to April 9, 1942, respectively, in defense of the Philippines.

Returning to the United States, he reported early in 1946 for a postgraduate course in surgery at Northwestern University Medical School. Completing his instruction in March 1947, he was Assistant Chief of Surgery at the U. S. Naval Hospital, Pensacola, Florida, until December 1949, when he transferred to the U. S. Naval Hospital, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to serve as Resident in Surgery. In February 1951 he was assigned to Surgical Service at the U. S. Naval Hospital, Bethesda,

Maryland, and in February 1952 became Assistant Chief of Surgery there. In May 1955 he was ordered to report to the U. S. Naval Hospital, Jacksonville, Florida, as Chief of the Surgical Service. He was serving as such when relieved of active duty pending his retirement, effective February 1, 1959.

In addition to the Bronze Star Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster and Gold Star (Combat "V"), the Purple Heart Medal, and the Army Distinguished Unit Emblem with Oak Leaf Cluster, Rear Admiral Berley has the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with star; World War II Victory Medal; National Defense Service Medal; Philippine Defense Ribbon with star and the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation Badge.

After retirement, he subsequently entered private practice in Jacksonville, Florida, specializing in General and Thoracic Surgery. His office is in the Marshall Taylor Building in that city.